

Record

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Missionary parents meet at Garaywa

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The first-ever National Missionary Parents Fellowship Retreat was held April 19-20 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton, the birthplace of the missionary parents movement now taking root in many other places across the nation.

Conceived nearly seven years ago by a small band of Mississippi Baptist missionary parents with support from the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Mississippi Missionary Parents Fellowship soon sparked interest in other states.

Today, missionary parents organizations are present in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas — in addition to the Mississippi group.

"There's a real sense of joy and honor to be a member of the missionary parents fellowship. It's wonderful. It's uplifting," said Darlene Breland of Columbia, one of the retreat organizers and a charter member of the Mississippi fellowship. Her children serve as IMB missionaries in the south African country of Malawi.

"There are about 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries, which works out to about 10,000 missionary parents. It's good to be in touch with other people who 'speak the same language' when it comes to our missionary children. We understand each other. When we hear

what other missionary parents are going through, it makes us think, 'They're surviving this, and I can, too,'" she said.

The Mississippi Missionary Parents Fellowship started with 18 people, Breland recalled, and now missionary parents from other states come to Mississippi to observe the group here and learn to organize their own group back home.

A network of contacts and e-mail addresses has gradually developed, she said, and the idea was hatched among that informal group to bring all the missionary parents together for a retreat during which the groundwork for a national organization could be laid.



MISSIONARY PARENTS MEET — Camp Garaywa in Clinton hosted the first-ever National Missionary Parents Fellowship Retreat April 19-20, playing host to about 175 parents of active Southern Baptist missionaries around the world. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

The dates and locations were soon agreed upon: April 19-20 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton, Mississippi Baptist's Girls in Action (GA) state campground.

"It was such a blessing. Everyone was so full of joy for being here with other missionary parents. This is not a grief support group. We are a God-loved, God-filled group," Breland pointed out.

Terri Willis, the missionary parents' IMB liaison in Richmond, Va., attended the retreat along with her boss, IMB President Jerry Rankin and his wife Bobbye — both native Mississippians and graduates of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.

providing the warm support necessary for parents who have children and families serving with IMB.

"In the future we're all praying that there will be ongoing, parent-led missionary parent groups in each state convention. I'm praying for the Lord to call out those parents who will step forward and begin missionary parents fellowships in their states," she said.

For more information, contact Kathy Burns in the Mississippi WMU Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3324 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 324. E-mail: kburns@mbcb.org.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Ministers' wives meet

4

Directions

5

SBC to meet in St. Louis

6-7

Sunday School lessons

11

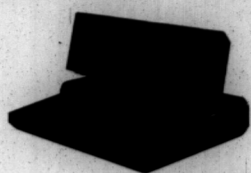
Miss. CP sees increase

Mississippi Baptists gave \$2,748,703 through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) for the work of the Lord in April, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which disburses the CP funds. The April total was 18.53% above the previous month's total of \$2,318,821, and 23.74% above the \$2,221,343 given in April 2001. Giving is up 9.4% over the same Jan.-April period last year, based on an all-time CP giving record in January of \$4,380,326. February and March fell below the \$2,543,588 needed each month to meet the 2002 Mississippi CP budget of \$2,522,002 set by messengers to the 2001 Mississippi Baptist Convention, but the January record and the uptick in April have kept the CP budget on track. Mississippi CP helps fund such programs as the International Missions Training Institute in Matobis, Brookhaven, and Hattiesburg on May 11; the Area Senior Adult Choir Festival in Hattiesburg on May 16; and the Single Adult Conference at Gulfshore Assembly in Panama Christian on May 25.

SBC CP down for month

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Gifts to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program in April were 10.72% below gifts for April 2001, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer James A. Chapman. Year-to-date support for CP Missions, however, was 7.9% ahead of totals at this same point last year. \$14,017,168.91 in CP gifts to support Southern Baptist work globally and across North America compared to \$12,633,853.39 in April 2001, a difference of \$1,383,315.52. April 2002 CP gifts of \$12,380,853.39 in April were .81% below April 2001 gifts of \$12,380,853.39. In year-to-date CP giving, \$117,502,122.92 has been received, compared with \$104,927,369.33 in 2001, an increase of 7.9% or \$822,860.05. The SBC operates on an October 1 fiscal year. In year-to-date designated giving, \$117,502,122.92 has been received, compared with \$116,769,666.94 in 2000-01, an increase of .63% or \$732,455.98. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the April receipts of \$14,017,168.91 were 94.34% of the budgeted \$14,858,239.92, or \$841,071.01 under the budget goal.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Secular news media: rather biased

The cover of the May 6 issue of Newsweek certainly looked impressive when the weekly newsmagazine arrived in the morning mail. In bold silver and white letters set against a deep black background, the cover asked, "What would Jesus do? Beyond the priest scandal: Christianity at a crossroads." A depiction of a cross anchored the bottom of the cover.

For Christians who were sincerely expecting an honest debate on what Jesus would do about errant priests or at precisely what crossroads modern Christianity finds itself, the cover story by Jon Meacham contained nothing except another bitterly disappointing lesson in how the national news media elite view faith, the Bible, the church, and believers themselves.

The first clue came even before the article began. Despite the inviting message on the cover, the inside headline above the beginning of the article on page 23 exposed the true thrust of the campaign: "Sex and the church/A case for change." The subhead was even more telling: "Cracking down on predators is long overdue. But beyond the scandal, it's time to rethink sexuality and the sacraments."

The second clue was betrayed by the extensive use of first person through the lengthy article. As any first-semester journalism student knows, first person usage such as "I" and "we," when referring to the writer, is limited to editorials and opinion pieces because a writer's opinions should never appear in a straight news report.

That's why editorials and opinion pieces are clearly marked with such identifiers as "Editor's Notebook," or "Analysis," or "Perspective." Yet nowhere in the entirety of Meacham's article is it identified as an editorial or opinion piece — which is exactly what it is.

What follows in the article is a breathtakingly slanted public relations proposal for opening wide the doors of the Christian church to homosexuality, simply because it fits the modern times in which we live.

While the article also deals with priestly celibacy (a non-issue for Southern Baptists) and the role of women in the ministry (a growing issue for Southern Baptists), it's difficult to overlook the overarching focus of the article — full and complete acceptance of homosexuality within the church. Here's an example from the article:

The more we learn about the roots of homosexuality, though, the more it appears that an attraction to the same sex is something that you are born with or develop so early that it is not what most of us would think of as a manageable "choice" any more than being born black, Jewish, or female is a manageable "choice." What traditionalists are asking, then, is for homosexuals to cut themselves off from an essential, natural part of who they are and from virtues — romantic love and the gift of sex in a monogamous relationship, among other things — most believers think are part of life lived in a godly way. And if science now teaches us that being gay may be a "natural" state, how can a reading of the Bible, including Saint Paul's condemnation of same-sex interactions in Romans, inarguably cast homosexuality in "unnatural" terms?

Let's see if we can muddle our way through all the doubletalk and circuitous logic of only this one paragraph in the 12-page article: We have learned of late that homosexuality is not a choice (no sources given for such enlightenment).

"Traditionalists" (translation: fundamentalist fanatics like you and me) would deny homosexuals full expression of their sexuality in the same loving, committed context as a heterosexual marital relationship.

TEN YEARS AFTER THE L.A. RIOTS SUMMER'S HOT MOVIES

Newsweek

JESUS

Beyond the Priest Scandal:



Science trumps the inspired Word of God when it comes to sexuality (again, no sources given), so the Apostle Paul and others are just plain wrong in describing homosexuality as an abomination before God.

All the irresponsible bias contained in this one article in one issue of one news magazine brings us to the point that has been made many times in this space — don't trust the secular news media to give us the whole story, or even a simple, objective straight news report on a topic as important as homosexuality and the church.

Rely instead on your faith in God and his Son Jesus Christ, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and the Bible. With a combination like that first and foremost in our lives, there's no way to go wrong.

Summer is just around the corner and that means my favorite time of year is here — Vacation Bible School (VBS)! What other program in the church provides such concentrated time to tell boys and girls about Jesus?

Churches must provide the VBS opportunity because it is a major evangelistic tool for Southern Baptists. In the year 2000, 91,000 decisions were recorded because of VBS. Approximately 25% of all baptisms in Southern Baptist churches were the outcome of VBS decisions for Christ (Director's Planning Guide, page 4).

We must never assume that because we live in Mississippi that all children have heard of Jesus. Several years ago I was teaching sixth graders in VBS and I asked them to locate John 3:16 in their Bibles.

I noticed one child had difficulty doing the assignment. After class I talked with him and discovered that this was his first time to hear John 3:16. He lived in Rankin County with a church on every corner, and did not know of Jesus' love for him.

GUEST OPINION:



Encountering the one true God

By Cindy Sansing, children's minister
Liberty Church, Flowood

Churches must place a high priority on VBS because of the outreach potential that it provides, and their budgets should reflect this desire to share the Gospel.

The 2002 theme for Vocational Bible School is Amazon Outfitters. This year the boys and girls will be on an expedition to find the one true God. If there was ever a time for children to know that there is one true God, that time is now! Recent world events

have been a source of confusion for children and adults. As a nation, we have been exposed to the devastating results of those who serve other gods.

Through this year's Bible Study time, boys and girls will be taught that the one true God is the Creator of the world and that he sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

They will also discover that God is a healer and a provider. That message is timely, as our

nation seeks to heal and we realize that God does provide even in the midst of tragedy.

The teachings of VBS this year will help children in their future to recognize the one true God, when faced with other beliefs and the need to rely on God for their everyday life.

Sunday, May 19 has been designated as the National Day of Prayer for Vacation Bible School. Let me encourage your church to participate in this event because VBS affects your entire church membership. VBS is not only for children.

Many new Christian friendships have been developed among teachers as they served together. New teachers have been identified and placed in service because of the confidence they gained in teaching VBS.

VBS allows all of the spiritual gifts to be exercised whether your gift is teaching or serving refreshments. There is a place for you to serve in your church's VBS.

Let's all do our part to make sure that boys and girls encounter the one true God this summer.



SBC to convene in St. Louis on June 11-12

ST. LOUIS (BP) — Southern Baptists will elect a new president and move forward in missions, family life, and vision for the kingdom of God during their June 11-12 annual meeting in St. Louis. A comprehensive schedule of the meeting and associated gatherings is published on pages six and seven of this issue.

Only one presidential nominee has been announced, Dallas-area pastor Jack Graham of Prestonwood Church, to succeed Merritt, an Atlanta-area pastor who has served the maximum two consecutive one-year terms.

The election will take place Tuesday afternoon, June 11, in St. Louis' America's Center, site of the two-day Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting and various auxiliary meetings such as the June 9-10 Pastors' Conference, Executive Committee booth in the SBC exhibit hall following the Tuesday morning session. (BP special photo)

The SBC's passion for missions likely will be fueled by the Tuesday appearance of aid workers Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer who were arrested last year by the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan for sharing their faith — and by the convention's closing speaker Wednesday afternoon, Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Also ahead at the SBC:

- A continuing emphasis on strengthening families, with messengers (members representing local churches) to learn details about the first-ever convention-wide family rally — June 19, 2003, in Phoenix, Ariz., the day after the June 17-18 SBC



CURRY, MERCER TO SPEAK AT SBC — Dayna Curry (left) and Heather Mercer, relief workers held prisoner in Afghanistan last year, have accepted an invitation to address Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers June 11 during the Executive Committee report. They also will be available at the Executive Committee booth in the SBC exhibit hall following the Tuesday morning session. (BP special photo)

annual meeting there. The rally is among the initiatives of the SBC's two-year-old Council on Family Life led by former SBC president and Oklahoma City-area pastor Tom Elliff.

- Introduction of a new thrust, Empowering Kingdom Growth (EKG) described as a vision for what Jesus taught and called for — a thoroughgoing concentration on the kingdom of God. The work of an eight-member Cooperation Task Force of state convention and SBC entity leaders, the EKG thrust has been endorsed by the Southern Baptist Association of State Convention Executive Directors and the SBC Executive Committee.

This year's convention will

continue a change made last year to begin the final SBC session Wednesday afternoon at 3 p.m. and ending around 6 p.m., replacing the Wednesday evening session.

The presidential address is scheduled for 11 a.m. Tuesday, while Claude Thomas, pastor of the Dallas/Fort Worth-area First Church, Euless, will deliver the convention sermon at 8:30 p.m. that night.

Interpretations of The Highest Power for the Greatest Task theme will be presented by Robert "Bob" White, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Georgia, on Tuesday morning; evangelist Junior Hill of Westmeade-Decatur, Ala., Tuesday afternoon; Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church, Lake Forest, Calif., and Terry G. Fox, senior pastor of Immanuel Church, Wichita, Kan., both on Wednesday morning.

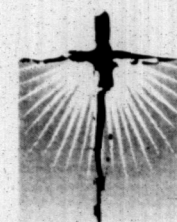
Curry and Mercer, who were among eight foreign aid workers held by the Taliban from August until their rescue just

before Thanksgiving, will address messengers during the 10 a.m. Tuesday SBC Executive Committee report.

The International Mission Board report is slated for 11:15 a.m. Wednesday; North American Mission Board (NAMB) report, 2:55 p.m. Tuesday; LifeWay Christian Resources report, 7:25 p.m. Tuesday; Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission report, 4:55 p.m. Wednesday; Annuity Board report, 10:35 a.m. Wednesday; the six SBC seminaries report, 3:50 p.m. Tuesday; and Woman's Missionary Union report, 3:15 p.m. Wednesday.

The week prior to the SBC, the annual Crossover evangelistic effort coordinated by NAMB and Missouri Baptists will penetrate metro St. Louis with the gospel. Hundreds of adults and teenagers will participate in mission opportunities throughout the region.

The two-day schedule for the annual meeting will mean messengers wanting to introduce resolutions must do so before the



MISSISSIPPI
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THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Americans can help

WASHINGTON (BP) — The considerable influence of American Christians can make a difference in the lives of persecuted believers in North Korea and Sudan, participants at a May 1 summit on the issue were told. About 200 people, many of them Christian denominational and organizational leaders, met at a Washington hotel for a second summit on global persecution. The first such summit, held in 1996, helped awaken American Christians to the plight of believers in various countries. It also launched a campaign that resulted in enactment of the International Religious Freedom Act and establishment of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Conveners of the latest summit hoped it would have a similar impact in aiding Christians under two especially brutal regimes. North Korea and Sudan are "in a class by themselves," Nina Shea told the participants. They are "absolutely genocidal," she said. Shea, director of Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, is a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, a panel that advises the White House and Congress on persecution issues. Kim Jong Il, the ruler of North Korea's Marxist government, knows the power of Christianity, said Norbert Vollertsen, a German doctor who has spoken out on the human rights abuses he witnessed during 18 months in the country. "It seems to me United States Christians do not know their power," Vollertsen told those in attendance. Michael Horowitz, who, as a Jew, has been a leader in the anti-persecution movement in Washington, encouraged the participants to maintain their efforts. North Korea and Sudan "are close to collapse," he said. The efforts of American Christians on behalf of their fellow believers also will help other religious adherents, Horowitz said.

Looking back

10 years ago

A group of Southern Baptist moderate-conservatives, called the Southern Baptist Denominational Relations Information, Inc., is publishing a series of pamphlets aimed at Baptist laypeople. The group hopes to inspire grassroots Baptists to "reclaim" the Southern Baptist Convention.

20 years ago

Bailey Smith believes that the greatest contribution made during his tenure as president of the Southern Baptist Convention is the "new peace" he brought to the denomination. "My greatest contribution is... bringing harmony to the convention," he stated at the close of the annual meeting in New Orleans.

50 years ago

Sam Gore, head of the art department at Mississippi College in Clinton, is ordained to the full gospel ministry by the New Ireland Church, Union, where his father, J.E. Gore, is pastor. (Note: Gore holds this position at Mississippi College to this day.)

Korean deaf ministry opening Gospel doors

WHEATON, Md. (BP) — "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the words of Christ," the Bible says in Rom. 10:17 — but what if one can't hear?

That's the issue with which Chang Hwang deals. Hwang is deaf, and his passion is to reach other Korean deaf people for the Lord.

Hwang pastors the Deaf

Church of Washington — the first and only church for deaf Koreans in America. The eyes are the ears of the deaf, he said through his new secretary, Joyce Kim, who interpreted for this interview.

Hwang started the church last August. It meets at 4 p.m. every Sunday at Hanuri Baptist Church's facilities in Silver Spring, Md. The congregation mingles and greets each other. Songs are "sung" through signing.

People are ushered into the presence of God through the music, not because they hear it, Hwang said, but because the expressions are large, fluid, and exagger-



FELLOWSHIP TIME — Pastor Chang Hwang (seated, left) and his wife Kyunghee (seated right, holding baby) always invite members of the Deaf Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., to gather after each worship service for fellowship and a meal prepared by Kyunghee. (BP photo)

ated, and the facial motions are different. It's recognized as a holy expression.

The sermon is signed in both Korean and American languages and is printed on a projector in both languages.

Hwang offers an altar call at the end of the service. Reaching the deaf, Hwang signed, is different because they have never heard the Gospel before. It isn't as easy to communicate it to them, so he is sharing a little at a time.

He sees the effect. At a recent worship service, one man worshipped with tears running down his face.

After worship each week, Hwang's wife Kyunghee offers food she has prepared to everyone who attends. Most don't have a lot of money. The majority are college students at Gallaudet Deaf College.

The feeling is comfortable and they eat with chopsticks. The fellowship, Hwang said,

is very important to everyone there.

Hwang also leads a Bible study on Wednesdays at his office and works on his tape ministry throughout the week with volunteers from the church who are available to help. Hwang's latest initiative is teaching Korean sign language to further the ministry.

Hwang, who became deaf as a small boy, grew up in Korea and began attending a Christian church when he was in the third grade. It was a fun social time, he recalled.

When he was in the ninth grade, he committed his life to Christ. A pastor was signing about God's forgiveness and Hwang realized he was a sinner in need of mercy. Hwang gave his heart to Jesus.

His face lit up as he signed and spoke in Korean, "I received joy in my heart. While in Korea, Hwang met his wife Kyunghee, a fashion designer and seamstress. They have two daughters, Meehye, age 12, and five-month-old Suyeon. Meehye is not deaf and is beginning to speak in Korean and English and to sign in both languages.

Hwang's passion shows in his face and in his office. Hundreds of videotapes line the shelves. The tape ministry is a big part of his outreach, not only to the church and deaf community in the area, but all across the United States. Hwang signs his messages and has them recorded with a digital camera.

With the right resources, Hwang and members of the Deaf Church could very well begin to help increasing numbers of deaf Koreans grasp the Gospel with their eyes and begin to spread the Word with their hands.

Merritt sets Committee on Committees

James Merritt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has announced his appointments to the SBC Committee on Committees.

The committee has 70 members, two from each of the 35 state or regional conventions qualified for representation on Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) entities. Members of the Committee on Committees are appointed by the SBC president and are not subject to approval by SBC messengers. The Committee on Committees serves until a successor committee is appointed the following year by the incumbent SBC president.

SBC Bylaw 19 says the Committee on Committees "shall nominate all special committees authorized during the sessions of the convention not otherwise provided for." The usual responsibility of the committee is to nominate members of the Committee on Nominations, which, in turn, nominates trustees to serve on the various national entities of the SBC.

Committee on Committee representatives from Mississippi include Randy Bostick, pastor of Oakland Church, Corinth; and Shannon Marshall, pastor of Steep Hollow Church, Poplarville.

Kidnapped missionaries facing increased danger

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A failed ransom deal has heightened the danger facing kidnapped missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham in the Philippines. New Tribes Mission (NTM) issued a statement May 1 about the missionaries who were kidnapped May 27, 2001 by an Osama bin Laden-related terrorist group in the Asian nation.

"We have read the media reports stating that a spokesman for the Abu Sayyaf Group has made threatening remarks in response to the Philippine government's refusal to negotiate a ransom payment for the Burnhams. Such a threat reinforces the urgency of the situation.

"This latest report reminds us all of the importance of praying for Martin and Gracia. Pray also for the families of the Burnhams; this makes a difficult time even more trying. In your prayers, please remember Deborah Yap, the Filipina nurse who is also being held hostage."

A \$300,000 ransom payment raised by the Burnhams' families failed to free the missionaries around Easter, when the Abu Sayyaf Group subsequently demanded an additional \$200,000, according to an April 26 report in The New York Times. A CNSNews.com report May 2 stated that the demand had risen to \$2 million. New Tribes Mission has often reiterated that it has not been involved in any ransom deal.

"The mission was not consulted about this agreement," NTM said April 25 of the most

recent reports of a ransom deal with the terrorist group. "The families acted independently of NTM. New Tribes Mission maintains its policy to not pay ransom. NTM was not aware the family members were involved in a deal until... April 20."

In March, New Tribes

Mission acknowledged there has been a shift in U.S. policy on ransom payments, but noted: "Paying ransom only increases the risk of future kidnappings. As missionaries, the nature of our work makes us vulnerable to kidnappings. Therefore, major mission organizations

have agreed to establish a no ransom position in order to send the message that it is not profitable to kidnap missionaries."

The interdenominational missions agency, based in Sanford, Fla., specializes in planting indigenous churches among unevangelized people.

Ministers' wives group organized

BRANDON, Miss. (Special) — Patterned after ministers' support/discussion groups that have been meeting in Rankin Association for several years and are now spreading across Mississippi, a special group of ministers' wives has begun to gather monthly to talk confidentially about issues unique to their lives.

The setting is casual, but the conversation is not always so casual. This is a time for sharing in a safe environment without feeling threatened. Ministers' wives can feel alienated. While their husbands regularly meet with peers in ministry, spouses have few occasions to be in touch with other ministers' wives.

"Getting them together for fellowship and sharing similar concerns must be purposeful. It won't just happen," said Laura Richardson, a licensed professional counselor at Crossroads Counseling Center in Brandon and a former church secretary.

Richardson read an article by Charlotte Graham in The Clarion-Ledger newspaper of Jackson that highlighted the challenges facing ministers and their families in today's world. She believes the Lord used the article to convict her that something special needed to be done to foster relationships between ministers' wives.

The result is the ministers' wives group that has been meeting in Rankin Association for the past three months. Richardson facilitates the group discussion along with Omega Stephens, wife of Rankin Association missions director Allen Stephens.

"It's good to talk with others to learn that your feelings and experiences may not be so strange after all. (Ministers' wives) learn that others go through similar situations and find creative ways to not only survive but to honor God while doing so," Richardson said.

"With Laura's expertise in group facilitation and Omega's 35 years as a minister's wife, these two make a great team," said Perry Sanderford, director of Crossroads Counseling Ministry and co-founder of Covenant Ministerial Fellowship — the organization that facilitates support/discussion groups for ministers.

"Both Laura and Omega are in touch with the special challenges and dedicated hearts of ministers' wives, who share so much in common in their calling to serve God vocationally. Offering ministers' wives the opportunity to simply come together regularly in a safe environment — hearing from one another and sharing in laughter, tears, victories, and fears — serves to personally strengthen them, their families, and their husbands' ministries," Sanderford said.

For more information on the support group in Rankin Association or for information on how to start support groups in other areas of the state, Richardson can be contacted at (601) 939-6634.

India province in need to salvation message

NEW DELHI (BP) — People in western India's Gujarat province need more than an end to Hindu-Muslim violence that has stolen over 900 lives in the past two months, says a Southern Baptist worker familiar with the region.

They also need open hearts and an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Home to more than 41 million people, Gujarat has been racked by violence since late February, when 59 Hindus were burned to death by a Muslim mob that attacked a train in which the Hindus were riding.

The Hindus were returning from Ayodhya, where a temple was about to be built on the site of a mosque destroyed by Hindus in 1992, resulting in riots that killed 3,000 people. That mosque itself had been built on a Hindu holy site in the 16th century.

Before the train attack, Christian workers in Gujarat had seen some progress in evangelistic outreach, said the Southern Baptist worker. A massive earthquake that struck the region in January 2001 allowed Christian relief workers to establish relationships in Hindu and Muslim communities.

However, "the kind of tension that's in Gujarat now would have hindered any progress toward relationship building and evangelism," the worker said.

On top of the problems caused by the violence, India's political situation has become precarious, as the government — led by Hindu nationalists — has been besieged with angry demands to end the violence in Gujarat. While the government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee survived a May 1 censure vote in parliament, the fragile coalition that keeps him in power has been badly damaged.

Tensions with neighboring Pakistan also have risen. That mostly Muslim country fears the violence in Gujarat might spread across the border.



IN VAIN — Hindus believe that bathing in India's Ganges River will wash away their sins, unaware that true salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. They gather daily at river's edge in the vain hope that they can bring about their own spiritual purification. (BP photo)

The spiritual division — and darkness — that prevails across India offers no hope of real peace, say missions analysts.

India is home to most of the world's 900 million Hindus, but 12% of the country's 1 billion residents are Muslim. Most of India's Hindus and Muslims cannot trust Christ simply because they have never heard the Good News that through him God has provided the path to salvation.

"It's a place that really needs the Gospel," the worker said. He encouraged Christians to pray for relief in community tensions that will allow Christians to share the Gospel with Hindus and Muslims.

"We need to see the Lord change hearts in a huge way. The release of community tensions isn't going to be enough," he said.

"There needs to be an openness of the hearts of the people for the Gospel."

Editor's note: Additional information can be found at:

• Missions teams in southern Asia: <http://www.peopleteams.org/CASA.htm>.

• Search for prayer needs from India: <http://www.imb.org/CompassionNet/countries.asp>.

• Search for personnel needs in southern Asia: <http://www.imb.org/FPNeeds/LocationSearch.asp>.

A SPECIAL MOTHER

Frequently, you hear about similar situations, but it's not every day that you get to actually see this unusual sight.

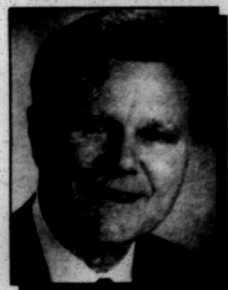
Some friends had a cat with a litter of kittens. Some folks they knew had a dog that had some puppies and, for whatever reason, the mother dog pushed aside one of the puppies and would not care for it.

All the efforts of the owners to get the puppy in on the meal-times were to no avail. It looked like the little runt puppy was not going to make it. The folks with the cat offered to take the puppy and put him in with the litter of kittens to see if the mother cat would accept him.

Guess what? It worked! The mother cat just welcomed the pup into her family. Nobody bothered to tell the little fellow that he had a funny-looking mother or bothered to tell the mom that she had a kid that looked a little bit different. No — both of them enjoyed a warm, nurturing, happy environment and the little pup grew up.

Sometimes the family structure may be wonderful, though it may not be ideal. I suppose that's the way it is for all of us.

That is the way it has been



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

since 1897, as Mississippi Baptists have provided a home environment that cares for the whole family, but especially for the children, through The Baptist Children's Village.

While the needs of children have significantly changed over the last hundred years, and the pressures on families have become even greater, The Baptist Children's Village has continued to remain true to its mission of bringing hope where things may seem hopeless and help where there is no one else to care.

As the events of September 11, 2001, unfolded and as the day moved along, many people became increasingly aware of the fact that there were hundreds, no, thousands of children who were left without a mom, or a dad, or in some cases, both were gone. That tragedy continues to live itself

out dramatically in the lives of those precious children.

On another level, sometimes, very quietly, certainly not so dramatically, terror strikes families in Mississippi and innocent children are the victims that need help.

Sometimes the tragedy is medical — a debilitating disease strikes or death comes. Sometimes it is economic and literally rips the support from the family. Sometimes it is a moral crisis that tears the family apart and the children need a safe place.

For over a hundred years, thousands and thousands of children have found a nurturing, loving, Christ-provided atmosphere that will offer a hand and hope.

On this weekend of Mother's Day, I want to encourage you to be a part of this marvelous ministry. The Mother's

Day offering provides an opportunity for us to make a strong statement of support for this caring ministry.

If you have given in the past, please consider doing so again. If you have never made a financial contribution, think about a special Mother's Day gift that will be translated into a child-caring gift at The Baptist Children's Village. You can designate the gift through your church or you can just send a check to P.O. Box 27, Clinton, MS 39060.

A little child woke up in the middle of the night frightened by the thunder and lightning from a storm which was passing by. He ran to his parents' room and wanted to get in bed with them, but the mother took the little boy back to his room and explained that everything would be alright and that God was there with him. He listened to her encouragement and instruction and then responded, "But I want somebody here with skin on."

The Baptist Children's Village has been and continues to be the response on the part of God's people to frightened children to put skin around the love of God so that it might be seen, heard, and felt.

Happy Mother's Day!

House votes to protect housing allowance

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. House of Representatives weighed in on the legality of a cap on the housing tax exemption for clergy April 16, approving without opposition a bill designed to preserve the longstanding allowance.

The House voted 408-0 for the Clergy Housing Allowance Clarification Act, H.R. 4156. The bill would clarify the exemption by amending the Internal Revenue Code to make clear the allowance should not exceed the "fair rental value" of a house, including "furnishings, appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities." The bill would codify the revenue ruling which the IRS had been using for years. A Senate version of the legislation has not been introduced, but senators could consider the House-approved measure.

Those interested in contacting their senators about the legislation may do so by accessing www.erc.com/capitolhill.

Revival date

Agricola, Agricola: May 19-22; Sunday, 10:50 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Randy Von Kanel, executive director, Global International Outreach, Tupelo, evangelist; Brad Day, minister of music, Agricola Church, music.

Homecomings

Tylertown, Tylertown: May 19; Founders Day, honoring the 14 charter members and first pastor; worship and memorial service, 11 a.m.; covered dish lunch following in Family Life Center; musical program following.

New Zion, Liberty: May 19; worship, 11 a.m.; covered dish lunch following; music by Threefold Truth, 1:30 p.m.; Mark Wicker, speaker.

2002 SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

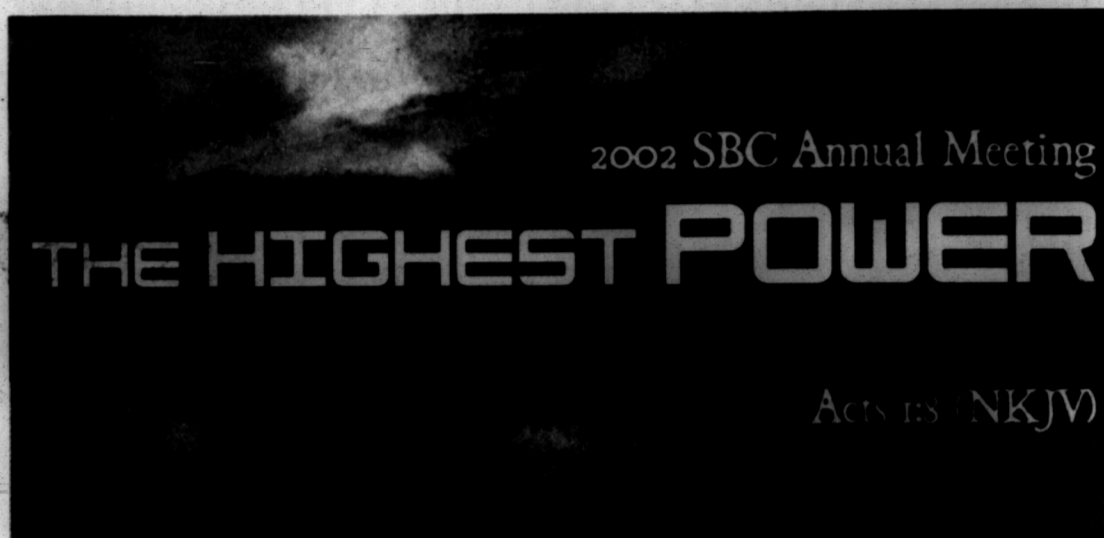
June 11-12 • St. Louis, Mo.

TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 11

- 8 a.m. Inspirational Music
First Church, Dallas, Adult Choir and Orchestra, Keith Ferguson, minister of music, Eddie Fargason, assoc. min. of music/instrumental director
- 8:10 a.m. Congregational Praise and Worship
Jeff Cranfill, associate minister of music, First Church, Snellville, Ga.
- 8:15 a.m. Call to Order
James Merritt, president, Southern Baptist Convention, pastor, First Church, Snellville, Ga.
Registration Report and Constitution of the Convention
Lee Porter, SBC registration secretary retired pastor, Lawrenceville, Ga.
- 8:20 a.m. Prayer
Grant Ethridge, senior pastor, First Church, Lavaca, Ark.
- 8:25 a.m. Committee on Order of Business (First Report)
Ron Rogers, chairman, pastor, Rocky Mountain Church, Rifle, Co.
- 8:30 a.m. Announcement of Committee on Committees, Credentials, Resolutions, and Tellers
James Merritt
- 8:35 a.m. Local Arrangements Committee Presentation
John R. (Jack) Wilkerson, vice president for business and finance, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville
- 8:40 a.m. Crossover St. Louis Report
Robert E. (Bob) Reccord, president North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, Ga.
- 8:45 a.m. Welcome
- 8:55 a.m. Testimony
- 9:05 a.m. Response
R. Philip Roberts, president
Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.
- 9:10 a.m. Introduction of Motions and Resolutions
James Merritt
(All resolutions must be presented before today's afternoon session)
- 9:30 a.m. Committee on Nominations Report
David H. Shepherd, chairman, director Northeast Campus, Mid-America Seminary, Schenectady, NY
- 9:40 a.m. Theme Interpretation
J. Robert (Bob) White, executive director Baptist Convention of Georgia, Atlanta
- 10 a.m. Executive Committee Report (Part 1)
Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer, Nashville
- 10:50 a.m. Congregational Praise and Worship
R. Todd Bell, minister of music and worship
Prestonwood Church, Dallas
- 10:55 a.m. Worship in Music
The Martins, concert artists
- 11 a.m. President's Address
James Merritt
- 11:40 a.m. Benediction
Freddie Gage, evangelist, Euless, Tex.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 11

- 1 p.m. Inspirational Music
First Church, Jacksonville, Fla., Youth Choir and Orchestra, Joseph Bolin, associate minister of music
Ed Dickinson, instrumental director
- 1:10 p.m. Prayer
Wayne Hamrick, pastor, Atco Church, Cartersville, Ga.
- 1:15 p.m. Business: Committee on Order of Business (Second Report)
Ron Rogers
Introduction of Motions
Reporting Proposed Resolutions
Executive Committee Report (Part 2)
Morris H. Chapman
- 1:30 p.m. Messenger Information Survey
John L. Yeats, SBC recording secretary, editor
Oklahoma Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma City
- 2:10 p.m. Election of Officers (First)
James Merritt



- 2:30 p.m. Music
The Martins, concert artists
The Highest Power for the Greatest Task . . . in North America!
- 2:35 p.m. Theme Interpretation
Jerry Vines, pastor, First Church, Jacksonville, Fla.
- 2:55 p.m. North American Mission Board Report
Robert E. (Bob) Reccord, president, Alpharetta, Ga.
- 3:05 p.m. North American Mission Board Presentation
Robert E. (Bob) Reccord
- 3:25 p.m. Theme Interpretation
Junior Hill, evangelist, Westmeade-Decatur, Ala.
- 3:45 p.m. Congregational Praise and Worship
Scott White, senior minister of music and worship, First Church, Woodstock, Ga., with Mark Wills, country artist
- 3:50 p.m. Seminary Reports
L. Paige Patterson, chairman, Council of Seminary Presidents
president, Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, NC
- 4:15 p.m. Election of Officers (Second)
James Merritt
- 4:30 p.m. Introduction of New Motions (Last Opportunity)
James Merritt
- 4:55 p.m. Reporting Proposed Resolutions
Benediction
Kevin Cosby, senior pastor, St. Stephens Church, Louisville, Ky.

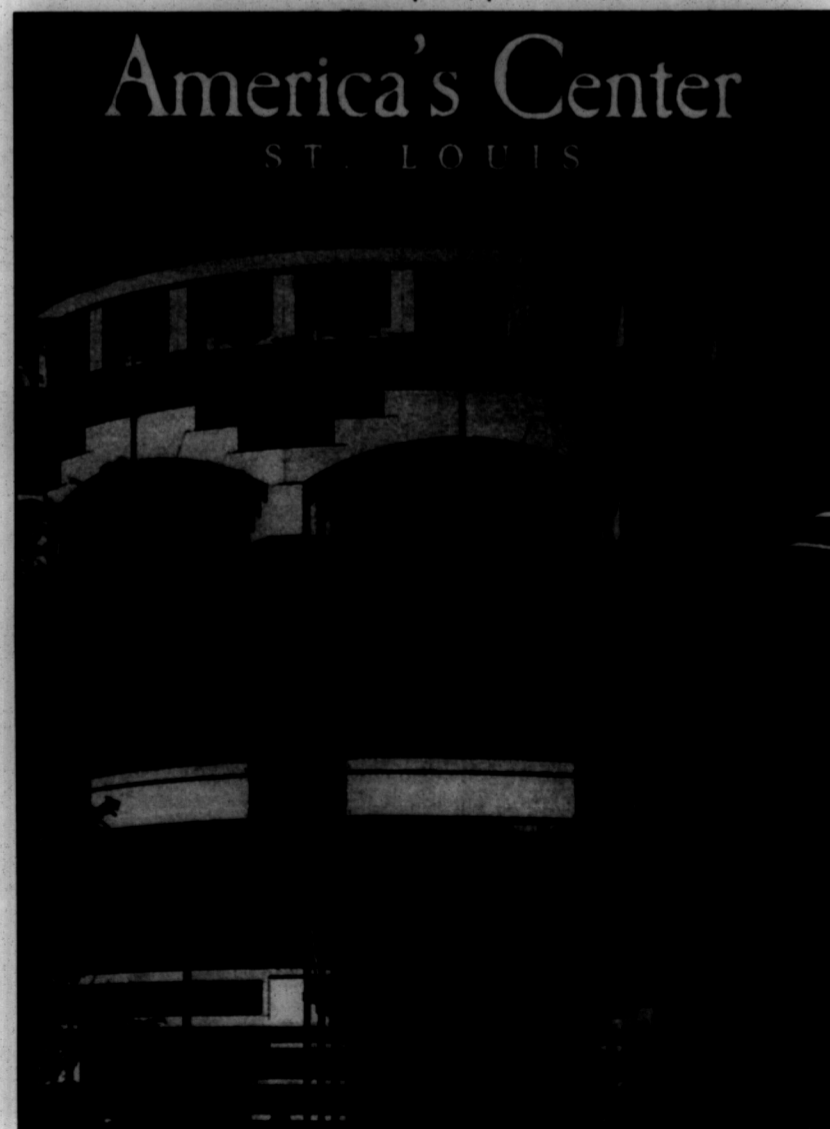
TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 11

- 6:30 p.m. Concert of Praise
First Church, Snellville, Ga., Adult Choir and Orchestra, Rick Forbus, assistant pastor, music, convention music director, Jeff Cranfill, associate minister of music, Starla Harbin, national recording artist, Jane Keel, concert artist, with Mark Wills, country artist
- 6:40 p.m. Congregational Praise and Worship
Rick Forbus, assistant pastor, music, convention music director, First Church, Snellville, Ga., with Mark Wills, country artist
- 6:45 p.m. Prayer
Lincoln N. Bingham, cooperative ministries consultant, Kentucky Baptist Convention, pastor, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.
- 6:50 p.m. Election of Officers (Third)
James Merritt
- 7 p.m. New Orleans Presentation
Charles S. Kelley, Jr., president, New Orleans, La.
- 7:15 p.m. Business: Committee on Order of Business (Third Report)
Ron Rogers
- 7:25 p.m. LifeWay Christian Resources Report
James T. (Jimmy) Draper, Jr., president, Nashville
- 7:35 p.m. LifeWay Christian Resources Presentation
Jimmy Draper

- 7:55 p.m. Previously Scheduled Business
James Merritt
- 8:20 p.m. Reporting Proposed Resolutions
Inspirational Music
First Church, Snellville, Ga., Adult Choir and Orchestra, Rick Forbus, assistant pastor, music, convention music director, Jeff Cranfill, associate minister of music
- 8:30 p.m. Convention Message
Claude Thomas, pastor, First Church, Euless, Tex.
- 9:05 p.m. Congregational Praise and Worship
Kim G. Noblitt, minister of music, First Church, Euless, Tex.
- 9:10 p.m. Benediction
C. Richard Wells, president, The Criswell College, Dallas

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JUNE 12

- 8 a.m. Concert of Praise
First Church, Merritt Island, Fla., Adult and Student Choirs and Orchestras,
Byron Cutrer, associate pastor, music and worship
- 8:10 a.m. Congregational Praise and Worship
Byron Cutrer
- 8:15 a.m. Prayer
Richard P. Oldham, pastor, Glendale Church, Bowling Green, Ky.
- 8:20 a.m. Baptist World Alliance
Tony Cupit, director of evangelism, Falls Church, Va.
- 8:30 a.m. Election of Officers (Fourth)
James Merritt
- 8:40 a.m. Business: Committee on Order of Business (Fourth Report)
Ron Rogers
- 9 a.m. Previously Scheduled Business
Ron Rogers
- 9:15 a.m. Committee on Resolutions (First Report)
Frank Harber, chairman, senior pastor, First Church, Colleyville, Texas
- 9:45 p.m. Southwestern Seminary Presentation
Kenneth S. Hemphill, president, Fort Worth



2002 SBC PASTORS' CONFERENCE

June 9-10 • St. Louis, Mo.

SESSION 1, JUNE 9

"Lest We Forget — Our Calling"
5:40 p.m. Pre-Session Praise
Combined Choirs of First Church,
Arnold, Mo., Ed Callahan, director,
and Second Church of Springfield,
Mo., Joe Crider, director
6 p.m. Welcome
Ken Whitten, president, Pastors'
Conference 2002,
Idlewild Church, Tampa, Fla.
Prayer
Robert Werner (Retired),
Concord Church, St. Louis, Mo.
6:05 p.m. Congregational Praise
Joe Crider, director
Second Church, Springfield, Mo.
6:10 p.m. Praise
Combined Choirs of First Church,
Arnold, Mo., and Second Church,
Springfield, Mo.
6:15 p.m. Message
John Marshall, pastor,
Second Church, Springfield, Mo.
6:45 p.m. Praise
Combined Choirs of First Church,
Arnold, Mo., and Second Church,
Springfield, Mo.
6:50 p.m. Message
Jack Graham, pastor,
Prestonwood Church, Plano, Texas
7:20 p.m. Congregational Praise
Ed Callahan, director,
First Church, Arnold, Mo.
7:25 p.m. Recognition
"Lest We Forget"
Michael Catt, senior pastor,
Sherwood Church, Albany, Ga.,
presents flowers to Mrs. Ron Dunn
7:30 p.m. Praise
Geron Davis and Kindred Souls
7:45 p.m. Message
Robert Pitman, pastor,
Kirby Woods Church, Memphis
8:15 p.m. SBC President's
Welcome
James Merritt, pastor,
First Church, Snellville, Ga.
8:20 p.m. Prayer/Offering
O. S. Hawkins, president,
Annuity Board, Dallas

8:30 p.m. Congregational Praise
Joe Crider, director,
Second Church, Springfield, Mo.
8:35 p.m. Praise
Choirs and/or Geron Davis and
Kindred Souls
8:40 p.m. Message
Fred Luter, pastor, Franklin Avenue
Church, New Orleans
9:10 p.m. Prayer
Waylon Moore, First Church,
Dade City, Fla. (Retired Pastor)
9:15 p.m. Praise

SESSION 2, JUNE 10

"Lest We Forget — Our Children"
8:15 p.m. Pre-Session Praise
St. Stephen Church Choir, Louisville,
Ky., Kevin James, director
8:30 a.m. Welcome
Michael Claunch, vice president,
Pastors' Conference 2002,
First Church, Slidell, La.
Prayer
Ralph Sawyer, senior pastor,
First Church, Wentzville, Mo.
8:40 a.m. Congregational Praise
Kevin James, director,
St. Stephen Church, Louisville, Ky.
8:45 a.m. Praise
By Design
8:50 a.m. Message
John Sullivan, executive director,
Florida Baptist Convention,
Jacksonville, Fla.
9:20 a.m. Praise
St. Stephen Church Choir, Louisville,
Ky., Kevin James, director
9:25 a.m. Message
Kevin Cosby, senior pastor,
St. Stephen Church, Louisville, Ky.
9:55 a.m. Prayer/Offering
Domingo Ozuna, senior pastor,
Primera Iglesia Bautista,
Grand Prairie, Texas
10 a.m. Congregational Praise
Ron Upton, director,
Idlewild Church, Tampa, Fla.
10:05 a.m. Praise
By Design

10:15 a.m. Message
Ken Davis, Ken Davis Productions,
Franklin, Tenn.
10:45 a.m. Praise
This Hope
11 a.m. Message
Jay Strack, president, Student
Leadership University, Orlando
11:30 a.m. Prayer
Les Wesley, senior pastor,
Community Church,
Baton Rouge, La.
11:35 a.m. Praise

SESSION 3, JUNE 10

"Lest We Forget — Our Church"
1 p.m. Pre-Session Praise
Rodrigo Rodriguez
1:10 p.m. Praise
Brian Arner
1:15 p.m. Welcome
Charles West, secretary of Pastors'
Conference 2002, First Church,
Bethalto, Ill.
Prayer
Jon Lorch, senior pastor,
First Southern Church, Jerseyville, Ill.
1:25 p.m. Congregational Praise
Scott White, director,
First Church, Woodstock, Ga.
1:30 p.m. Praise
Brian Arner
1:40 p.m. Message
Johnny Hunt, pastor,
First Church, Woodstock, Ga.
2:10 p.m. Praise
Rodrigo Rodriguez
2:15 p.m. Message
Mac Brunson, senior pastor,
First Church, Dallas
2:45 p.m. Prayer/Offering
Paul Garcia, senior pastor, Iglesia
Bautista Agape, East St. Louis, Ill.
2:50 p.m. Congregational Praise
Vernon Whaley, director,
Olive Church, Pensacola, Fla.
2:55 p.m. Election of Officers
3:10 p.m. Praise
Charles Billingsley



Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. Proverbs 22:28

3:15 p.m. Message
Ted Traylor, Pastor, Olive Church,
Pensacola, Fla.
3:45 p.m. Praise
Charles Billingsley
3:55 p.m. Message
Junior Hill, evangelist, Hartselle, Ala.
4:25 p.m. Prayer
Abraham Byrd, senior pastor,
Greater St. James Church, Alton, Ill.
4:30 p.m. Praise

SESSION 4, JUNE 10

"Lest We Forget — Our Country"
5:40 p.m. Pre-Session Praise
Eddie Struble, Idlewild Church
Student Choir, Tampa, Fla., and
Jamie Parker, Bellevue Church
Student Choir, Memphis
6 p.m. Welcome
Ken Whitten, president, Pastors'
Conference 2002, Idlewild Church,
Tampa, Fla.
Prayer
Robert Patton, pastor,
Covenant Church, Tampa, Fla.
6:10 p.m. Congregational Praise
Ron Upton, director, Idlewild
Church, Tampa, Fla.

6:15 p.m. Praise
Wintley Phipps
6:30 p.m. Message
Adrian Rogers, senior pastor,
Bellevue Church, Memphis
7:05 p.m. Congregational Praise
Jim Whitmire, director,
Bellevue Church, Memphis
7:10 p.m. Praise
Janet Paschal
7:25 p.m. Message
Jerry Vines, pastor,
First Church, Jacksonville, Fla.
8 p.m. Prayer/Offering
Chaplain, Brig Gen Charles
Baldwin, Deputy Chief of the Air
Force Chaplain Service,
Bolling Air Force Base, DC
8:05 p.m. Praise
Choirs Patriotic Salute — Idlewild
Church Student Choir, Tampa, Fla.,
Eddie Struble, director, and
Bellevue Church Student Choir,
Memphis, Jamie Parker, director
8:20 p.m. Message
Lt. Col. Oliver North, USMC (Ret.)
8:55 p.m. Prayer
Paul Kim, pastor,
Berkland Church, Cambridge, Mass.
9 p.m. Praise

2002 SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION SCHEDULE

continued from page six

10 a.m. Election of Officers (Fifth)
James Merritt
10:10 a.m. Committee on Committees Report
Edward Johnson, chairman, pastor, First Church,
Ocala, Fla.
10:20 a.m. Inspirational Music
Starla Harbin, national recording artist,
First Church, Snellville, Ga.
10:25 a.m. Recognition of Former SBC Presidents
James Merritt
10:35 a.m. Annuity Board Report
O.S. Hawkins, president and chief exec. officer, Dallas
10:50 a.m. Inspirational Music
Rick Muchow and Musicians, pastor of magnification,
Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, Calif.
*The Highest Power for the Greatest Task . . .
in the Nations!*
10:55 a.m. Theme Interpretation
Rick Warren, pastor, Saddleback Church,
Lake Forest, Calif.
11:15 a.m. International Mission Board Report
Jerry A. Rankin, president, Richmond, Va.
11:25 a.m. International Mission Board Presentation
Jerry A. Rankin
11:45 a.m. Theme Interpretation
Terry G. Fox, senior pastor, Immanuel Church,
Wichita, Kan.
12:05 a.m. Benediction
Ruben Hernandez, state missions and evangelism direc-
tor, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, Irving, Tex.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 12
3 p.m. Concert of Praise
First Church, Merritt Island, Fla., Adult and Student
Choirs and Orchestras, Byron Cutrer, associate pastor,
music and worship, with Blackshear Place Church,
Flowery Branch, Ga., Adult Choir and Orchestra,
Rob Britton, pastor of music and worship,
Keith Blackwell, director of instrumental music
3:10 p.m. Prayer
Ken Cademartori, senior pastor,
Mason Dixon Church, New Freedom, Pa.
3:15 p.m. Woman's Missionary Union Report
Wanda S. Lee, exec. dir.-treasurer, Birmingham, Ala.
3:25 p.m. Memorial
3:35 p.m. Presentation of Outgoing Officers
Morris H. Chapman
3:40 p.m. Presentation of New Officers
Morris H. Chapman
3:45 p.m. Business: Committee on Order of Business
(Fifth Report)
Ron Rogers
Election of 2002 Convention Sermon Preacher,
Alternate, Music Director
Previously Scheduled Business
3:55 p.m. James Merritt

4:10 p.m. Committee on Resolutions (Final Report)
Chairman
4:40 p.m. Southern Seminary Presentation
R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president, Louisville, Ky.
4:55 p.m. Ethics & Religious Liberty
Commission Report
Richard D. Land, president, Nashville
5:15 p.m. Congregational
Praise and Worship
Rick Forbus, assistant pastor, music, convention music
director, First Church, Snellville, Ga., with Starla Harbin,
national recording artist, and Mark Wills, country artist,
and the Combined Choirs and Orchestras of First Church,
Merritt Island, Fla., Byron Cutrer, associate pastor, music
and worship, and Blackshear Place Church, Flowery
Branch, Ga., Rob Britton, pastor of music and worship,
Keith Blackwell, director of instrumental music
5:25 p.m. Special Guest Speaker
Bill Bright, founder and chairman,
Campus Crusade for Christ, Orlando
5:55 p.m. Concert of Praise
First Church, Merritt Island, FL, Adult and Student
Choirs and Orchestras, Byron Cutrer, associate pastor,
music and worship, with Blackshear Place Church,
Flowery Branch, Ga., Adult Choir and Orchestra,
Rob Britton, pastor of music and worship,
Keith Blackwell, director of instrumental music
6 p.m. Benediction
Terry Fields, senior pastor,
Liberty Heights Church, West Chester, Ohio



2002 WMU ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE

June 9-10, 2002

Ferrara Theater — America's Center, St. Louis

Theme: *God's Plan ... My Part*

Meeting in One Hundred Fourteenth Year

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION OFFICERS:
Janet T. Hoffman,
president

State WMU Presidents,
vice-presidents

Yolanda Calderon,
recording secretary

Wanda S. Lee,
executive director/treasurer

SCRIPTURE VERSE:

"So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" 2 Tim. 1:8-9 (NIV).

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION VISION STATEMENT:
Woman's Missionary Union challenges Christian believers to understand and be radically involved in the mission of God.

June 9 Afternoon Session, 2 p.m.
FOCUS: God's Plan — The World
"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."
John 3:16 (NRSV)

Instrumental Praise Max Lyall
Call to Order and Welcome Janet T. Hoffman
Introduction of Local Arrangements Committee
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner, directing
Hymn "We Have Heard the Joyful Sound"
Announcements and Introduction of
International Missionaries Wanda S. Lee
Intercession for Missionaries
Testimony Cheryl Derbyshire
Into All the World
Piano Medley Max Lyall
Acteens Presentation Pam Smith, Karla Karr
Hymn "O God of Love, Enable Me"
Special Music Marjean Shofner
Interview with Robert and
Cheryl Reccord Wanda S. Lee
Draw Nigh to God Randy Sprinkle
Choral Benediction Marjean Shofner
4-5 p.m. Breakout sessions (rooms 260-267)

June 9 Evening Session, 7:30 p.m.
FOCUS: God's Plan — Our Nation
"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord"
Ps. 33:12 (KJV).

Praise to the Lord Native PRAISE
Call to Order and Welcome Janet T. Hoffman
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner
Hymn "America the Beautiful"
Announcements and Introduction of
North American Missionaries Wanda S. Lee
Intercession for Missionaries Michelle Cantrell
Testimony Mark Custalow
Taking the Gospel to All of North America's
Indigenous People
Testimony Acteen
Piano Medley Max Lyall
Message Henry Blackaby
God at Work in North America

Hymn "Because I Have Been Given Much"
Message Debbie Morris
Forgiving the Dead Man Walking
Draw Nigh to God Randy Sprinkle
Choral Benediction Marjean Shofner

June 10 Morning Session, 9 a.m.
FOCUS: God's Plan — My State
"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"
Acts 1:8 (NIV).

Instrumental Praise Max Lyall
Call to Order and Welcome Janet T. Hoffman
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner
Hymn "O Zion Haste"
Announcements and
Introductions Wanda S. Lee
Testimony Chet Cantrell
Where God Leads
Intercession for Missionaries Shawna Davis
Executive Board Report, Part 1 Wanda S. Lee
Discover the Joy of Missions Ministries
Election of Officers
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner
Testimony Stephanie Irwin, Nicole Beatty
Piano Medley Max Lyall
Draw Nigh to God Randy Sprinkle
Musical Benediction Marjean Shofner
11 a.m.-noon Breakout sessions (rooms 260-267)

June 10 Afternoon Session, 2:00 p.m.
FOCUS: God's Plan — The Association
"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others"
Phil. 2:4 (NIV).

Praise to the Lord Native PRAISE
Call to Order and Welcome Janet T. Hoffman
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner
Hymn "We've a Story to Tell"
Announcements and
Introductions Wanda S. Lee

Testimony Michelle Cantrell
We See God at Work
Intercession for Missionaries Mark Custalow
Executive Board Report, Part 2 Wanda S. Lee
Discover the Joy of Missions,
National Acteens Conference
What Acteens Means to Me Jennifer Martin
Piano Medley Max Lyall
Hymn Marjean Shofner
"God, Whose Purpose Is to Kindle"
Special Music Marjean Shofner
President's Address Janet T. Hoffman
Draw Nigh to God Randy Sprinkle
Choral Benediction Marjean Shofner
4-5 p.m. Breakout sessions (rooms 260-267)

June 10 Evening Session, 7:30 p.m.
FOCUS: God's Plan — My Part
"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" Rom. 12:6 (RSV).

Praise to the Lord Native PRAISE
Call to Order and
Welcome Janet T. Hoffman
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner
Hymn "Send Me, O Lord, Send Me"
Announcements and
Introductions Wanda S. Lee
Testimony Shawna Davis
My Part in God's Plan
Intercession for Missionaries Cheryl Derbyshire
Executive Board Report, Part 3 Wanda S. Lee
Discover the Joy of Missions:
Happy Birthday
Christian Women's Job Corps
Offertory Prayer David George
Offering
Piano Medley Max Lyall
Testimony Acteen
Praise to the Lord Marjean Shofner
Message Debbie Morris
Courage, Faith, and Forgiveness
Draw Nigh to God Randy Sprinkle
Musical Benediction Marjean Shofner
Adjournment

Justice Dept. to step up obscenity prosecutions

WASHINGTON (BP) — May is Pornography Victims Awareness Month. The designation, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft said in a May 1 statement, "is dedicated to recognizing the victims of pornography. Pornography and adult obscenity are more than demeaning pictures in magazines and on the Internet — they are steps down a path to the degradation and, too often, the real abuse of predominantly women and children."

Ashcroft, in his statement, noted that the Department of Justice "is dedicated to prosecuting those who illegally distribute adult obscenity materials and child pornography. These

prosecutions are a priority for this department and [its] Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section." Additionally, Ashcroft noted, "... the 94 United States Attorneys across this country stand committed to enforce the federal statutes in this area."

"Over the past year, the department has made significant progress toward reversing an almost decade-long absence of adult obscenity prosecutions," Ashcroft stated.

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Additionally, he noted, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section has been working with United States Attorneys to organize a June 2002 symposium to devise a common and coordinated approach to the prosecution of

obscenity providers.

"This department is dedicated to vigorously enforcing the laws of the United States," Ashcroft reiterated, "and those who illegally distribute obscene material will be prosecuted aggressively."



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Mississippi nominees for SBC positions announced

ST. LOUIS (BP and local reports) — Nominees to serve on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, the four denominational boards — International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, LifeWay Christian Resources, and Annuity Board — the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and the six seminaries have been selected by the 2002 SBC Committee on Nominations.

Nominees will serve if elected by the messengers to the

annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 11-12 in St. Louis. Mississippi Baptists nominated to serve include:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ida South, member of First Church, Mathiston (first term, to expire 2005), replacing Amy M. Clingan of Brandon, who resigned.

Clark Stewart, pastor of Harmony Church, Crystal Springs (second term, to expire 2006).

If elected, the nominees will

join Jim G. Butler, pastor of Trinity Church, Southaven, whose term expires 2004.

ANNUITY BOARD

No nominees from Mississippi were announced, as William T. Patterson, a financial senior vice-president from Jackson, is serving a term that expires 2003; and Frank H. Harmon, director of church-minister relations and annuity for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, is serving a term that expires 2004.

North American Mission Bd. Reva Daniel, member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton (first term, to expire 2006), replacing Barry Clingan of Brandon, who resigned.

Joseph I. Strahan of Vicksburg (second term, to expire 2006).

LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

Mark H. Anderson, senior pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson (first term, to expire 2006), replacing Gus Q. Meritt of Newton, who was ineligible for reelection.

If elected, Anderson will join Thomas Michael Webb, member of Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, whose term expires 2005.

SOUTHERN SEMINARY

No nominees from Mississippi were announced, as Thomas M. Atwood, pastor of First Church, Oxford, is serving a term that expires 2003; and Odean W. Puckett, retired pastor from Ridgeland, is serving a term that expires 2005.

SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY

No nominees from Mississippi were announced, as Willie R. Brumfield, pastor

of Immanuel Church, Vicksburg, is serving a term that expires 2003.

NEW ORLEANS SEMINARY

Philip Hanberry (second term, to expire in 2007). If elected, Hanberry will join Jerry L. Smith, pastor of First Church, Summit, whose term expires 2006; and Albert H. McMullen, retired pastor from Meridian, whose term expires 2006.

SOUTHEASTERN SEMINARY

No nominees from Mississippi were announced, as Richard W. Headrick, a member of Salem Heights Church in Laurel, is serving a term that expires 2006.

GOLDEN GATE SEMINARY

No nominees from Mississippi were announced, as Wilton T. Bennett, pastor of Riverside Church, Pascagoula, is serving a term that expires 2003.

ETHICS & REL. LIBERTY COMM.

James L. Brown, member of Trinity Church, Southaven (first term, to expire in 2006), replacing Paul D. Walley of Richton, who was ineligible for reelection.

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Bay Springs Baptist Church is located at 43 Hwy 528, Bay Springs. Complimentary tickets are required for admission and are available by calling the church office at (601) 764-4177 or (800) 903-4177.

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD Chuck Herring, pastor of First Church, Richland (first term, to expire 2006), replacing Billy Joe Beckett of Columbus, who was ineligible for reelection.

If elected, Herring will join Frank Gunn, retired pastor from Biloxi, whose term expires 2003; and Wayne Marshall, pastor of Longview Heights Church, Olive Branch, whose term expires 2004.



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- Pastors & Preaching are Critical
- Raising Leadership Issues
- Preaching that Connects with the Unchurched



Student Government Association members for 2002-03 at Mississippi College are: Matt Treadway, Clinton, president; H. Ross Dudley, Ridgeland, vice president; Rebecca McGee, Wesson, secretary; Karen Ray, Terry, treasurer; Pat Robbins, Gautier, chief justice; Landon Howell, Jasper, Ala., campus activities board chairperson; Jonathan Pettus, Brandon, Men's Affairs Board chairperson; Kalee Braswell, Raymond, Women's Affairs Board chairperson; and Jay Baggett, Collins, chief of staff. Pictured (front row, from left) are McGee, Braswell, and Ray; (back row) Baggett, Robbins, Dudley, Treadway, Pettus, and Howell.

The Annual Meeting of the Blue Mountain College Alumnae Association is scheduled for May 17-18. Sarah Spain, president of the Association, has announced that the following reunion classes will be recognized during this weekend: 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, and 2001. However, all alumnae are invited to participate in the weekend activities. Friday night accommodations and three meals (Friday picnic, Saturday breakfast, and Saturday luncheon) will be available on campus with advance reservations. Reservations can be made through the alumnae office by calling (662) 685-4771 ext. 131.

Mississippi College (MC) will offer a series of sports camps this summer. The Day Baseball Camp for boys entering grades K-9 is scheduled for June 17-20 at Frierson Field on the MC campus. The camp

will run from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. daily. Total cost is \$120. Registration fee is \$25. To register or for more information, contact Lee Kuyrkendall, (601) 925-3346 or Darryl Longabaugh, (601) 925-3301.

A Day Soccer Camp for girls entering grades 3-9 is scheduled for July 8-11 at the soccer fields on the MC campus. The camp will run from 8 a.m.-noon daily. Total cost is \$75. Registration fee is \$25. To register or for more information, contact Darryl Longabaugh, (601) 925-3301 or (601) 925-3892.

Day Tennis Camps, Elementary School camps for boys and girls entering grades 1-6 are scheduled for June 4 and 6; June 12 and 14; June 25 and 27; and July 9 and 11. Junior High Camps for boys and girls entering grades 7-9: June 18 and 20; July 16 and 18, at MC tennis courts. The camp

will run from 9-11 a.m. daily. Total cost is \$35. To register or for more information, contact David Boteler, (601) 925-3959 or Darryl Longabaugh, (601) 925-3301.

Mississippi College (MC) will hold the May 2002 graduation commencement for undergraduates on May 11 at 10 a.m. in A. E. Wood Coliseum on the MC campus. Graduate Student Commencement will be held on Friday evening, May 10, at 8 p.m. in Swor Auditorium in Nelson Hall. Law School graduation will be held Friday at 2 p.m. at First Church, Jackson.



Cathy

Approximately 540 undergraduate, graduate, and law students will graduate from the college. Graduation speaker for the undergraduate commencement on May 11 will be S. Truett Cathy, founder and CEO of Chick-Fil-A. Anita Gowin, professor and Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages will be the graduation speaker for the Graduate commencement on Friday evening.

Mississippi College Student Government Association (SGA) presented its annual Outstanding Faculty Award to Tommy Leavelle, of Clinton, professor and chair of Mathematics and Computing Science, during the Honors Awards ceremonies on April 23. The purpose of the award is to show the SGA's appreciation, and to recognize excellence among the undergraduate faculty of Mississippi College. Pictured (from left) are Lloyd E. Roberts, interim president; Leavelle; and Debbie Norris, interim vice president of Academic Affairs and dean of the Graduate School.



Roberts, Leavelle, and Norris

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

HURLEY BAPTIST CHURCH - Hurley, Miss., seeking full-time minister of music and youth. Please send resume to: Hurley Baptist Search Committee, P.O. Box 395, Hurley, MS 39555.

ROLLING FORK BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a summer youth minister. Approximately 30 youth of Baptist and other denominations are involved. 2 bedroom house is provided. The position could turn full-time at the end of summer if desired. If interested, please call Cissy Smith or Andy Anderson at (662) 873-4346 or the church office at (662) 873-2862.

EAGLE LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a full-time piano player. Please send resume to Eagle Lake Baptist Church, 15481 Hwy 465, Vicksburg, MS 39183 or call (601) 279-4301.

BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC sought by church averaging 110 in Sunday School. Please e-mail resume to mwsjgb@vicksburg.com or fax to (601) 636-7574 or mail to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180

BAY VISTA BAPTIST CHURCH is currently seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resumes to Bay Vista Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 2485 Pass Road, Biloxi, MS 39531.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH NETTLETON is seeking a summer youth minister. For details call (662) 963-7341. Send resumes to: FBC Nettleton, P.O. Box 427, Nettleton, MS 38858-0427.

HILLCREST BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a part-time music leader for Wednesday evening and Sunday morning. Contact Victor Dorman (601) 587-4113.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Ministry in natural disaster

Acts 27:1-28:10

By Sandra Gunn

Faith in God is the one reality in time of trouble. When a storm rages and the shipwreck is imminent, hope is generally abandoned. Here is a perfect opportunity for the Christian to stand up with faith and courage.

Paul, a prisoner, found himself in this very situation on his way to Rome to appear before Caesar. The voyage was long and arduous for the 276 people aboard ship, for sailing in October was not recommended because of possible great storms at sea.

It might be well for us to remember that Paul had experienced many other kinds of storms already in his life and ministry. His experience in dealing with this storm at sea goes back to what he has seen God do in the midst of other crises. Paul has little experience with ships

and sailing, but he has much experience in seeing how God has worked in his life.

Natural disasters occur in our world many times daily, and because of the broad media coverage, we have become calloused and unmoved, or we struggle with how to help the victims. We need to look carefully at how Paul reacted in the face of disaster, and learn from him.

Luke, the narrator of this voyage, gives us a vivid description of the journey. To read the narrative is to imagine the whistling winds, the buffeting of the waves, the straining ropes, the sound of the ship breaking up. All the measures they took to save the ship were to no avail. Verse 20 says all hope was abandoned. This is so true in our day as well.

Verse 21 tells us, "then Paul stood up." How bold he was to



Gunn

give comfort in the midst of danger. He dared to offer counsel when the others had already agreed what is best. He not only gave witness of having been spoken to by an angel of God, but he unashamedly declared God as the one to whom he belonged and served.

The message brought by the angel was that no man on board would lose his life. Twice Paul tells them to keep up their courage. All would be saved by Paul's God. Pagans without faith in God believed Paul who had such faith in God. Only by the Christian faith of one man were people saved from that doomed ship.

The faith that Paul exemplified was balanced and sane. He encouraged them by suggesting that they take in nourishment, and further led the way in eating, but not until he first gave thanks to his God in the presence of all. With the meal finished, and everyone full and more hopeful now, they lightened the load by dumping the grain overboard.

Now a new danger arose. The soldiers were responsible for the prisoners with their own lives, and the prisoners might escape when released to land. The soldiers, therefore, planned to kill the prisoners. The centurion wanted to be sure to save Paul, so he gave the command that all should seek to save themselves.

"And thus it happened that they all were brought safely to land." This came about by the providence of a sovereign God, and by wise planning and watchful care. Paul had a new opportunity to bear witness to men who would not have known God otherwise. Paul was again found faithful.

When they all reached the island safely, they discovered that it was the island of Malta. Who knew they would spend the next three months wintering there? Because of the rain and cold the inhabitants of the island kindled a fire. Luke used the term "barbarians" when describing the islanders. Luke also pays tribute to them for showing special attention to the needs of stranded people. Oftentimes unbelievers can be

more kind in acts of thoughtfulness than Christians are.

Paul, as he helped in gathering sticks for the fire, was bitten by a venomous snake, which actually fastened onto his hand and stayed there. Recognizing that he was a prisoner, the barbarians jumped to the conclusion that he was a murderer escaping justice, and fully expected him to fall over dead. When it was evident that nothing would befall him, they immediately began saying that he must be a divine being.

The head man of the island was a man called Publius, who received the centurion and Paul's party and entertained them for three days. Paul repaid this kindness by healing Publius' father and giving God the credit for it. This brought on a general healing as other sick islanders came to Paul.

Paul demonstrates to us many different ways of witnessing and ministering during a natural disaster. Divine providence is displayed throughout this story. God's sovereignty overrules the affairs of men.

Gunn is a member of First Church, Biloxi.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Practice Holy Living

Ephesians 4:17-32

By Robin Brumfield

This lesson is taken from Ephesians 4:17-32. It is about Christians living as believers and not as unbelievers. It also gives some specific examples of what Christian living means. The emphasis of this lesson is on practicing righteousness and holy living.

Believers are to practice righteous and holy living that is characteristic of Christians. This type of living differentiates believers from unbelievers. Believers tend to struggle with this truth and tend to live in ways that please themselves.

For some, this results in their being violent or immoral. For others, it results in them being indifferent to others.

They do not hurt or violate others in overt ways, but they are still living only for themselves. They have not learned what being a servant of Christ is all about.

Believers must decide that they will not live their lives according to their desires, but will obediently follow God's Word no matter how difficult it may be for them. People fail to take into account God's will and other people's rights. God's people are to differentiate themselves from unholy living through righteous and holy living.

This passage is broken into three sections. The first section deals with forsaking old standards (vv. 17-19).



Brumfield

Notice the emphasis in these verses — the dramatic contrast between living as a Christian and living as a Gentile or unbeliever. Paul characterized pagan living as hard-hearted, insensitive, and immoral. He is stressing the fact that if anyone, believer or unbeliever, refuses to heed to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, then they will become callous and will not be able to heed the Holy Spirit.

This is the reason that some believers can no longer tell when the Holy Spirit is talking to them. A person does not become callous overnight. It occurs over a period of time and is the result of failing to heed to the prompting of the Holy Spirit time and time again.

Each time it is a little harder to hear the Holy Spirit, until finally all communication with God through the Holy Spirit is ended. Christians must abstain

from living in any way(s) that would characterize them as unbelievers.

The second section is to embrace Christ's standard (vv. 20-24). Notice that in verse 20 the phrase "come to know Christ" ("learned Christ," KJV) refers not to the readers' conversion experiences but to their religious training following conversion. This is made clear by both the KJV translation and "were taught" in verse 21 and verse 22.

The word "surely" in verse 21 and "if so be that" in the KJV translates a term that in this context more accurately is translated "If it is true, and it is true."

Paul used the analogy of replacing an old (and out of date) garment with a new outfit in calling for Christians to replace pagan living with holy and righteous living. Notice that Christians are to "put off your old self." This means that believers are no longer to live by satisfying the desires of the flesh. They are to replace the

"old self" by putting "on the new self."

This means that the believer is to study the Bible and live each and every moment of the day by doing what Christ would do in that situation. Thus, applying this to our daily living as Christians, believers are to live in ways that are holy and righteous.

The third section is to make corrections (vv. 25-32). Note that this passage follows a pattern of identifying behavior to be avoided and the corrective behavior that is holy and righteous. Read over these verses very slowly and think about what is being said.

Paul identified specific behaviors that Christians are to avoid and contrasted them with behaviors Christians are to use to differentiate themselves from unbelievers. The application seems obvious, but I will state it anyway. Christians are to live in ways that are different from unbelievers.

Brumfield is interim pastor of Goodwater Church, Forest.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Cowboy Church enjoys CP success story

WAXAHACHIE, Texas (BP) — Before others noticed a trend, Cooperative Program (CP) Missions was riding it.

ing Toledo, Ohio, Syracuse, N.Y., and Riverside, Calif., the CMA report shows — and 55% of those who purchase country

community outreach/church inreach team-roping events in the church's arena.

Yup, the congregation that once met in a livestock arena has built a worship center and — in contrast to the gymnasiums of an earlier generation — an outdoor arena where team-roping, barrel-racing, and similar sports take place on a weekly basis.

CP Missions provided the resources needed to outfit (or establish) Cowboy Church and begin reaching people. In addition to advertising in the local media — newspapers, country radio and direct mail — CP Missions support provided fans in the shape of cowboy hats (the metal livestock arena wasn't air-conditioned), ball caps with the church's bronc-busting logo, and 1,000 Cowboy Bibles from The Bible League.

These works "would never have come into existence" without churches which have provided support through the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), Nolen said.

Cowboy Church, which gives seven percent of its offerings to BGCT/SBC missions and three percent to Ellis County Baptist Association, moseyed 12 miles down the road to start Frontier Church in October 2001.

About 500 people attend Cowboy Church on a regular basis; Gary Morgan is now pastor. Frontier Church, where Nolen is the startup pastor to about 120 people, gives the same missions tithe. An as-yet-unnamed cowboy church in eastern Ellis County is expected to start later this year.

"With 20-plus million people in Texas, we believe now there are at least a million people we can reach out to through these Old West Culture churches," Nolen said. "If we could reach 125,000 in the next 10 years, it would take 400 churches running 300 each to disciple them. This is probably one of the most overlooked church planting opportunities we have — maybe in America, but certainly in Texas."

"For sure it's not limited to Texas," Nolen continued. "I have a note to call a guy in Longview, Calif., who wants to start one of these churches. There's two planned for San Antonio; one already started in Eastland; Terrell and Commerce will start the first Sunday in May with 60 people already in their core group."

Location was one barrier, so Cowboy Church started in a familiar setting, and when they built, it was a metal building with a concrete floor.

Attire, money, and the time-honored "invitation" also were seen as barriers, Nolen said. So, during country worship services, cowboy hats don't come off except during prayer time. Nolen even preaches wearing one. No offering is taken, though one is received in upended cowboy hats. No invitation is given, though the sinner's prayer of repentance is prayed at the close of every service.

"It's not about traditions. It's not about money. It's not about hats," Nolen said. "It's about people being able to gain a comfort level where the Gospel does what only it can do."



NEW FAITH IN OLD WEST — Ron Nolen, pastor of Frontier Church in Ellis County, Texas, baptizes a new believer in a horse trough. (BP photo)

Two years before the events of Sept. 11 brought Americans to a new appreciation of home and family, church starter Ron Nolen lassoed CP for the tie needed to successfully start a cowboy church.

As a matter of fact, that's its name — Cowboy Church of Ellis County, just south of Dallas.

"CP missions is absolutely indispensable to what we're doing," said Nolen, who is now in his second plant of an Old West Culture church and is a consultant for similar church starts across the state and nation.

"No one knew there was this much Old West Culture people in Ellis County," Nolen said in a distinctively Texan twang. "These are people who tend to be cowboyyed-up or they have an affinity for Old West values and culture, the cowboy mentality, the values that pretty much settled this country — 'man's word is his bond,' that kind of thing."

This blue-collar people group for the most part has been ignored by upwardly mobile Southern Baptists, Nolen said. "That's a shame, because you can tell from country music that they're everywhere. They don't all have horses, but they have an affinity for the values and the culture."

"That's what the Cooperative Program is for — to help break down barriers here in the United States as well as around the world. Some think America is Gospel-hardened, but the fact is, they're Gospel-ignorant. God is using CP Missions and cowboy churches to change that."

Each week, more than 40 million American adults tune to one of the nation's 2,186 country radio stations, according to statistics compiled by the Country Music Association. Country format is nearly double that of second-place Adult Contemporary, which has 1,128 stations. News/talk format has 1,118 stations.

Country radio stations were rated No. 1 in 22 of America's top 100 markets in 2001, includ-

and cattle/sheep/horse/pig auctions usually take place.

This year nearly 1,000 joined in at Cowboy Church for the Easter celebration.

"They had been here all this time, but no one was noticing them as a distinct group, so when Cowboy Church was begun, it gave them a comfort level to come and seek the Lord," Nolen said. "We know all our Baptist churches have a vision for all people, but they didn't know that."

Cowboy Church reflects Old West Culture folks through worship services complete with a cowboy band that plays the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans' song "Happy Trails" at the close of services, small group discipleship that introduces them to Southern Baptists, and

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Clue: B = V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalm Eighty-Six: Four.

Bibles sporting variety colors

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Christians who are looking for a Bible that is both beautiful and practical may want to consider a new variety of Bibles that combine the two. Broadman & Holman (B&H), the trade publishing division of LifeWay Christian Resources, is producing a bonded leather, ultra-thin version of the Holy Bible (New International Version or King James Version translations) boasting one of five school varsity colors.

"We have Varsity Blue, Varsity Crimson, Varsity Orange, Varsity Purple and Varsity Red," said Larry King, product development manager of Bibles, reference and devotional books for B&H. "If these Bibles go over well, we will add midnight gold and green to the line."

It was King's idea to use the school colors to cover the Bibles. "I was in a meeting and someone said they had a school Bible they were asking for a UT orange [University of Tennessee] Bible, which we didn't produce at the time."

That started him thinking. "I thought, 'Why don't we buy Bible covers all the time and make them a different look. Why don't we make them look like school Bibles?'"

King said he was inspired by the idea of a Bible that was both beautiful and practical. "I thought, 'If we can make a Bible that is both beautiful and practical, we can make a Bible that is both beautiful and practical.'"

"It wouldn't be the same. This Bible is cool enough and different enough that they might pick it up and read it."

"Then I started thinking about Christian schools and Christian colleges and the Bible that they would want to read."

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